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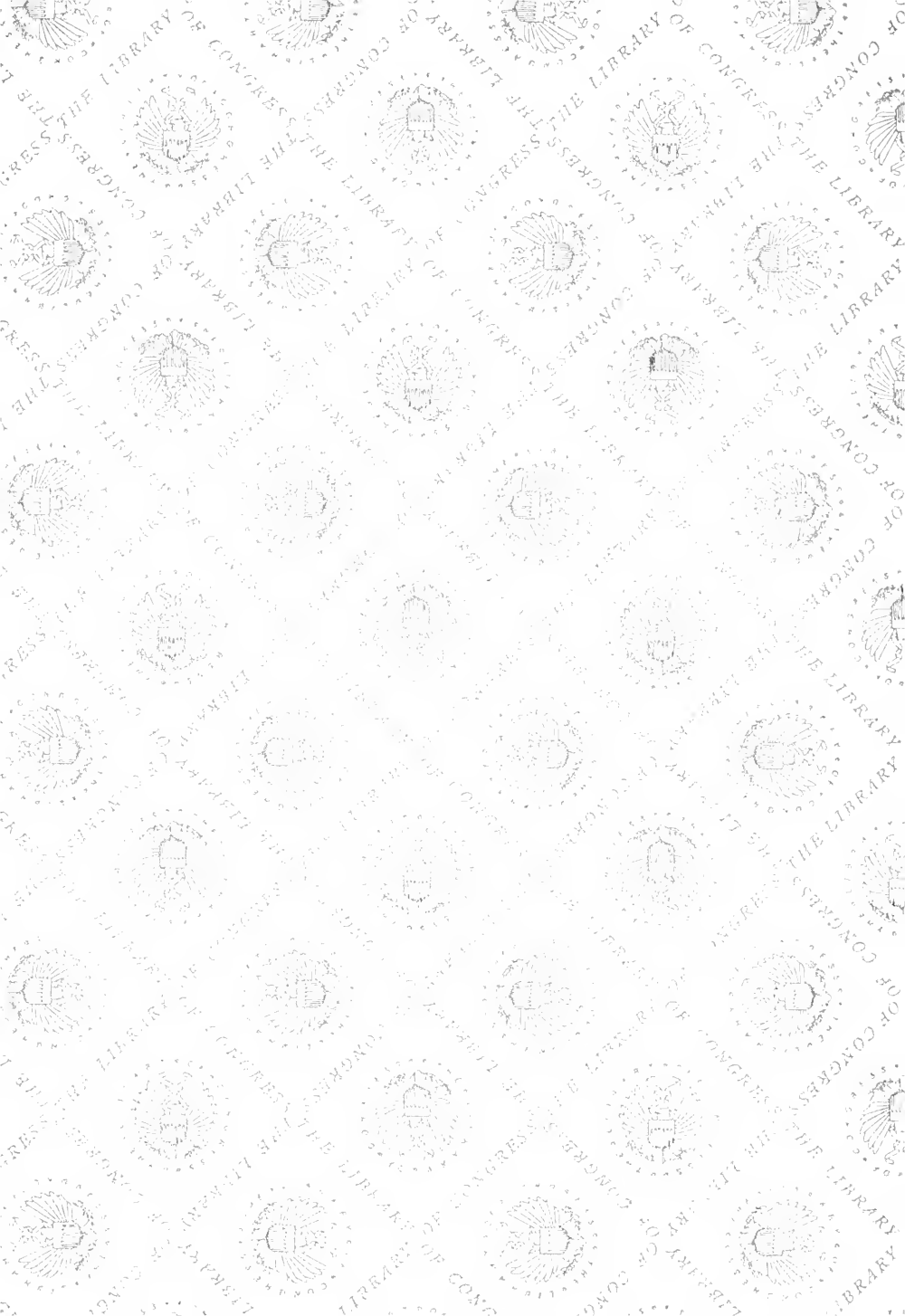
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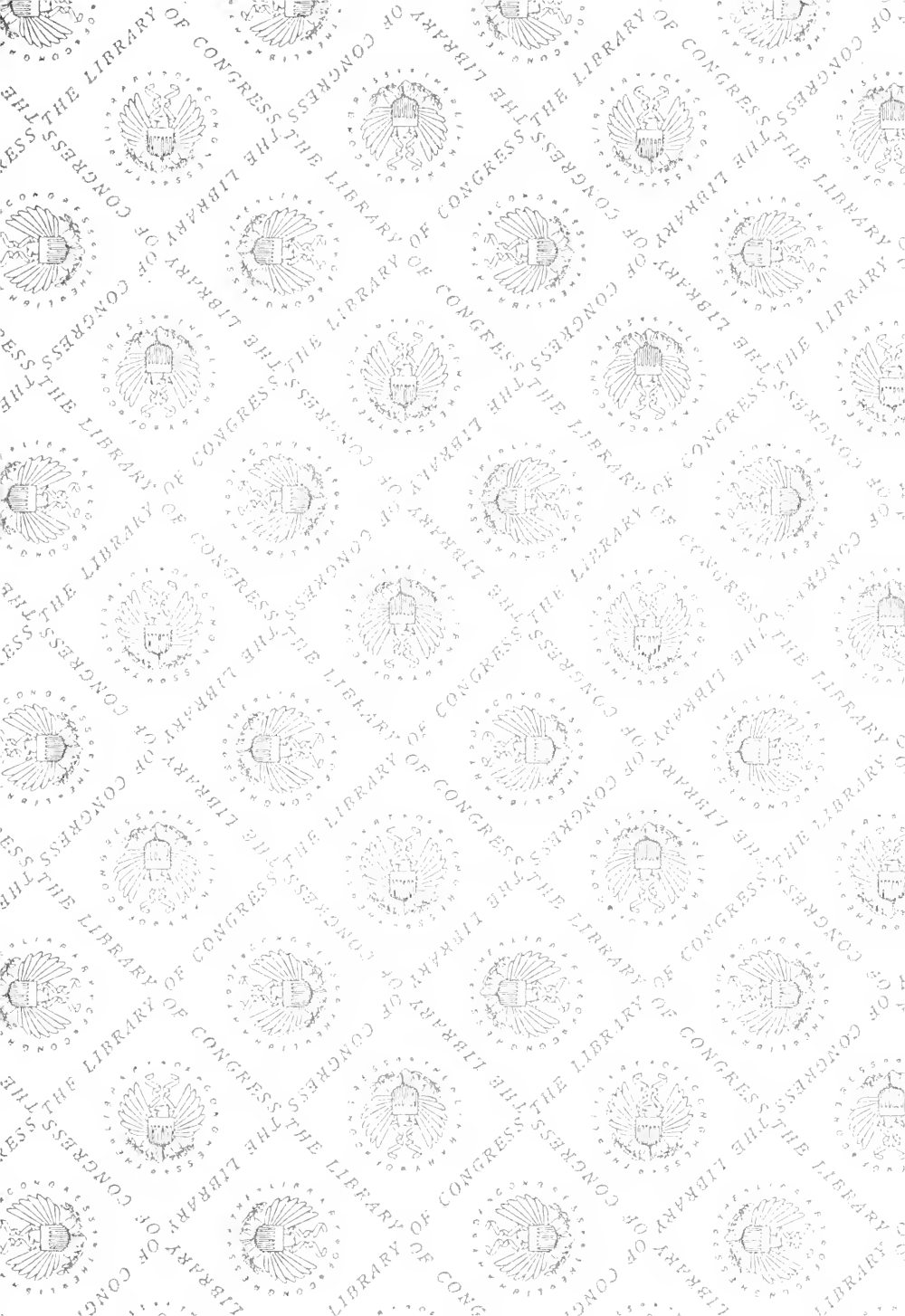
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IN MANY KEYS

IN MANY KEYS

BY

MARY KEELY TAYLOR

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TO
THE BELOVED MEMORY
OF
MY DEAR FATHER

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L'ENVOI

I

A HAND unskilled may touch and try the strings,
With vagrant fancies charming care away,
Some solace oft such idle music brings,
Whether the tune be plaintive, bold, or gay.

II

Not these the notes the master's hand awakes
When Art her gift to heaven-born Genius lends,
And o'er the chords his soul impassioned breaks
In sound that all our mortal speech transcends.

III

Yet may the master smile, sometimes, to hear
The faint, imperfect music that betrays
A kindred impulse, to his spirit dear,
And, smiling, pardon what he cannot praise.

THE BALM OF GILEAD TREE

I

FATE overtakes us all!
I blame not the decree that bade thee fall;
And yet, thou quaint old tree,
My soul resents the stroke that shattered thee,
In all thy spring-time show of bravery,
Still cheerful at the core,
Greeting the May so gallantly once more.

II

Alas, when we are old,
The invisible deep roots of life take hold
Upon a Past unknown
To newer generations; I had grown
To love thee for the memories thou alone,
Year after year, with me
Sweetly didst share, thou Balm of Gilead tree!

I

The Balm of Gilead Tree

III

How long ago it seems
Since first, a child, just mingling truth with dreams,
I stayed my steps to greet
Thy gracious shadow in the village street;
For I had heard belovèd lips repeat
Old words that seemed to bear
A charm — of Gilead and the Healer there.

IV

Dimly my heart perceived
Their mystic meaning; dimly I believed
God set thee there for good;
Wherefore, with childish faith, devout I stood
Beneath thy blossoming boughs, assured He would
From those green depths bless me, —
A little soul, aware of poverty.

v

Ah! many a year since then
Great storms have shaken thee, sweet suns again
Made glad thine heart; and I —

The Balm of Gilead Tree

I too have tossed in tempests, faced the cry
Of hungry winds, and seen at last the sky
 Look forth, divinely blue;
Not all a dream, that trust my childhood knew!

VI

Well hast thou done thy part,
Thy wayside warning to each careless heart
 Whispering, the summer through!
Might man but learn of thee to be as true
To His dear law Who gave thee light and dew,
 And bade thee to the end
With shelter, shade, and strength His earth befriend.

VII

Farewell! — 't is transient pain;
Yet O, whene'er this heart, a child again,
 Drawn close to Memory's breast,
Hears the old voices lulling doubt to rest
And owns the first beliefs are still the best,
 I shall remember thee,
Thou fragrant messenger of peace to me!

LOVE'S TEST

Le vent qui éteint une lumière allume un brasier.

BEAUMARCHAIS

I

PAST twelve! and chill through my shutter
A gust of the night-wind sweeps;
In the grate it startles the embers,
And the answering blaze up-leaps;
It flares the lamp on my table,
And the scared flame cowers and creeps
And dies in the dark. So work ends.
What task now the little wife keeps?

II

I shut my book; in the shadow
I sit and muse how stern
Blows the pitiless blast of Fate. — What!
You are come, Sweet? Ah, I turn
To the lips and the heart that love me!
Why I sit in the dark? — I learn
How a frail love dies of the hardship
That makes ours sparkle and burn!

OUR BIRTHDAY

To E. P. M.

I

HOW shy and sad this Child of Spring! —
Her secret spell
In wood and dell
She weaves with tears; her task is done.
Nor stays she for the blossoming;
While May flowers bud and bluebirds sing,
April is gone;
And none makes moan:
But you and I will not forget
A mark beside her grave to set.

A CHRISTMAS GREETING

I

A SIGH — a whisper, far away,
 May reach an ear attuned to hear;
 And I could half believe, to-day,
 Your spirit knows that mine is near.

II

Be well! be happy! so I pray.
 While round me reigns high Christmas cheer
I, for a moment, seem to stay
 Beside you: do you think so, Dear?

A LOVER CONSIDERS, COMPARES,
CONCLUDES

I

“BUY coal! buy coal!” —
 You hear it, Marguerite,
 Far down the distant street,
That lamentable, long-drawn cry —
And smile among your cushions where you lie,
With satin-slippered feet,
Deep in the velvet curve of that quaint chair
Carved like a shrine above your golden head:
What are you thinking, Sweet?

II

We note the difference, it may be said:
Outside, the wintry air,
Sharp as his voice that pierces like a knife;
The black and grimy trade;
The rough humanity that all its life
Is doomed to jolt and bawl
Beneath men's windows: hear the dolorous call:
“Buy coal! buy coal!”

A Lover Considers, Compares, Concludes

While here are warmth and bloom:
The glowing grate that tempts your graceful foot
To perch upon the fender; flowers
That make a silent summer in the room;
Books, music, art;
And you, the cause and crown
Of all this beauty, sit here, smiling down
On me, whose part
In the scene is to adore you — and I do!
Flower of my heart,
Blossoming so far above the world's dark root;
But human, too!

III

“Buy coal! buy coal!” —
That faint and vanishing cry,
How all unlike the sigh
With which, deliciously, you sink
Again among your cushions and (I think)
With soft approving eye
Survey the ring that white hand deigns to wear.
My ring — and yours! our sacred solitaire!
“Splendid,” you said. But I
Seem to look down into the blackness where
(Of us two unaware!)

A Lover Considers, Compares, Concludes

Fast wedged beneath the immeasurable weight
Of æons, slept this spark of fire.
Crystallized carbon? — So
The chemist says, and in its last estate
How infinitely higher
The world esteems it than this mean
Carbonaceous stuff, the common, the unclean,
Whose steady, watchful glow
Defying Night and Winter, guards so well
Your beauty's citadel!
But true these loyal Carbons to their own:
Their immemorial line
Burns in your grate, and sparkles in your stone;
The secret of the mine —
What lights the diamond in its rayless cell
They do not tell!

IV

What think you, Marguerite?
Is your thought mine, here kneeling at your feet?
Ah, smile before you speak —
So the pure oval of that faultless cheek
Rounds to a lovelier line!
“From coal to diamond a far cry,” you say?
Ay! — and a far cry, too

A Lover Considers, Compares, Concludes

From yonder blackened toiler in the street,
My exquisite girl, — to you!
That rude soul fated in its own dark way
To live and love, to suffer and to pray,
Like us — perhaps — some day.
Shall it be named with yours? — be named and owned?

V

Now, your heart speaks!
Now shines, tear-lighted, in those deepening eyes
The vision my soul seeks —
The fair true self, whose sweet humanities
Cheapen and put to shame
The tawdry elements of dust that claim
Homage and servitude from such as you! —
All vain, false, foolish things
Drop off their flimsy wings
And perish in the sunlight and the dew
Of love and pity God has made
To fill the heaven of a pure woman's heart!

VI

O, take your pleasure, undismayed,
Laugh, dance, my Sweet, and wear
Whatever's rich and rare;

A Lover Considers, Compares, Concludes

I know where hides my jewel, unconfessed!
I know the heart that beats beneath this vest
So broidered and beset
With flowery fancies, wrought
After some marvellous fashion, brought
Across the Atlantic to adorn you. Yet,
When these slow days are done,
When you, my Love, are won,
Won, past all argument, question, or retreat, —
When I shall listen closer to the beat
Of that dear heart, — will fear
Startle my own, to hear
How yours, all woman, denying naught to mine,
Is yet, divine!

KISMET

I

MANY a thing the heart divines
In its first dim youth,
Half aware of days unborn,
While yet in the front of morn
The Star of Childhood shines:
Many a thing the coming years
Seal with slow, reluctant tears
For truth.

II

Mock not thou the childish woe;
Soothe the groundless fear:
What prophetic shadow may
That little helpless heart dismay
Alas! we cannot know.
In mystery our lives unfold;
Yonder the secret may be told;
Not here!

A FALLEN LEAF

I

POOR faded leaf, blown shivering down to me,
Was it for this, thy home was fixed so far
Beyond the rude hand's reach, where winds are
free

In yon blue deep, and heaven so near to thee
Thou might'st unblamed have deemed thyself a star?

II

Was it for this that thou, the fairest there,
First of thy kindred felt the kiss of dawn,
Belovèd of the sunshine? — first didst share
The dewy whisper of the evening air,
And caught the pale moon's earliest smile forlorn?

III

Alas! there came to thee an evil day
When, with his subtle whisper, sweet and strange,
The late Year sought thee, dancing on thy spray,
And stole the freshness from thy heart away,
And flushed thy cheek, amazed, with crimson change.

A Fallen Leaf

IV

Flame-tinged and glowing in thy wayside tower,
Thou wast the wonder of the passer-by;
Perchance a marvel to thyself, that hour
When all thy being owned the fatal power
That matched thy splendor with the sunset sky.

V

Brief was thy dream! The frost is keen to-night,
And thou, poor outcast, tremblest in the dust,
Where heedless footsteps tread thee out of sight,
And none remembers thee to mourn thy blight —
From light — from life — to outer darkness thrust!

MY STAR

I

FAST falls the summer night
O'er field and wood, and this dark silent stream,
Where, resting on my oars, I watch day's light
Withdraw its last red beam.

II

Lo, in the west one star
From heaven's clear deep looks at me wistfully;
Later, a host will follow, brighter far,
But none so dear to me.

III

For thus, when life is done,
And Death's great shadow darkens o'er mine eyes,
For me shall thy lost face, our bliss begun,
Open God's Paradise.

MUSTERED OUT

I

THE cricket chirps in the orchard;
The night grows sweet with the scent of the
barley sheaves,
The wind is still; not a breath stirs the shadow of
leaves
The moon draws on the wall;
And close under my window I hear an apple fall.

II

O that old scent of the barley!
And the apples lying so cool in the dew-wet grass!
There was once a way, by the broken steps, you could
pass
To the orchard unseen:
Many's the night that way — after an apple — I've
been.

Mustered Out

III

She would come too, the wild girlie!
Slipping out under the sumachs behind the shed door,
White and noiseless — a spirit, a dream — she never
seemed more;

How we laughed when I sprung
Out from the bushes, and caught her! — Ah, we were
young!

IV

“Poor boy!” they say. “What a pity!”
Why, my youth dropped dead in her grave! ’t was all
the same, then,
In camp, on the march, in the field, I cared for the men,
Not for my own life — no!
And here I lie, glad of the pain that means I ’m to go.

V

But it’s good to lie here again
In the boys’ attic chamber, under the low brown eaves,
Watching once more the wall, and the curious shadow
of leaves,
Dreaming of her the same
As I dreamed years ago, when nightfall between us came.

Mustered Out

VI

Darkness and sleep — then the waking!
Dawn and her face! O my God, shall it be so again?
She said so. Thought of that shamed away many a stain
 From a soul none too pure.
I've been true to you, Love! In heaven I could not be
 truer.

VII

O good-bye, dark world of sorrow!
That's the last stab! — Now her little soft hand in my
 breast
Comes, stilling the anguish, hushing the heart's throb
 to rest,
 And her whisper! — She said,
“Sleep and peace for us both, in the holy home of the
 dead!”

A WOOD VIOLET

— If it have breath,
If life taste sweet to it, if death
Pain its soft petal, no man knows.

SWINBURNE

I

LINGERING, I stoop to look
On thee, lone dweller in thy forest nook!
Violet, thou dost not miss
This summer eve, thy little share of bliss!
Surely thou findest it sweet
Thy tiny tribute, at His gracious feet,
From that unstained cup,
Pure as in Paradise, to offer up!

II

To leave thee, I am loth,
Alike we sleep and wake; alike for both
Draws near the Unknown — Death!
And hast thou not, with that brief, exquisite breath

A Wood Violet

Whispering of Love divine,
Brought His own message to this heart of mine? —
Thou hast not lived in vain;
May'st thou in some far Eden bloom again!

NIGHTFALL

I

DARK between thy banks, O lonely River,
All day long thy restless waters moan;
In the busy summer fields, unheeded,
Like some mournful music's undertone,
Still their murmur saddens everywhere
Labor's ceaseless din, beneath the noontide glare.

II

But when night along the misty valley
Steals, and shuts the door of forge and mill,
Hushing all the stir of toil and traffic,
While the twilight air breathes cool and still, —
Then thy voice calls loud across the hills,
And with sound supreme the darkening silence fills.

Nightfall

III

All day long the lonely heart keeps sighing;

Toil and thought resist its yearning prayer;

Life needs many things, nor stays for pity:

But night comes at last; day's strife and care

Die forgotten; then, O heart of mine,

Have thy way! The silence and the dark are thine.

HYACINTHS

I

PURPLE and white and rose!
Out of the sad black mould
The fragrant spikes uncloze,
The Hyacinth buds and blows.
But how, in the dark and cold,
Each blossom its duty knows
To be purple, or white, or rose,
No Hyacinth ever has told!

II

Purple, and white, and rose —
A dream of the hues that fleet
At sunset o'er Alpine snows.
And ever the wonder grows
That a bulb in my window-seat,
Here by the salt sea, knows
How the Jungfrau pales and glows,
When Twilight kisses her feet!

ENDYMION

“Blessed, methinks, is the lot of him that sleeps, and tosses not, nor turns:
even Endymion.”

THEOCRITUS, Idyl III.

I

“**H**USH!” she said, “ye Winds that visit Latmos!
Breathe no whisper where Endymion lies,
Lost to earth beneath the brooding skies;
Closer creep, ye silvery Mists of midnight,
Let no keen-eyed Star his sleep surprise.

II

“Lull him, O ye Dews, — he must not waken!
Steep his chilly senses in a dream
Deep and dim, where this fond face shall seem,
Softly gliding earthward through the shadows,
Like a meteor pale to pause and gleam.

Endymion

III

“No — whate’er betide, he must not waken!
Only while he sleeps, Love dares be bold,
Lingering o’er the lips to kisses cold;
Only in the dreaming ear that misses
Half its meaning, shall the tale be told.

IV

“Fate is cruel, my belovèd — sorrow
Comes with knowledge: never mortal heart
Learned its bliss except with bliss to part.
Mine it is to know how much I love thee!
Thine to dream — thrice happy that thou art!

V

“Happy? — Yes, through all the troubled ages
Nothing changes in this dream of thine,
By Love’s sacred silence made divine;
All things fade and fail that are not shadows:
Sleep,” she sighed, “in sleep forever mine!”

EGERIA

I

WHAT whispered she to him
Beside the water dim,
Under the misty shade of leaves that clung
So thick about the fountain? Dark and sweet
The veiled night her silence o'er them hung;
No sound of wandering feet,
Nor stealthy step of sylvan creature stirred
Among the wood-paths; far away he heard
Rome's midnight pulses beat,
But heeded not. What whispered she to him
Beneath the shadowy leaves, beside the water dim?

II

Some secret, dread and old,
From mortals over-bold
Hid by the high and jealous gods away?
Some rune of things that were or things to be,
Or sage enchantment wherewith princes sway
The round earth and the sea,

Egeria

And happy hearts of men? So legends say.
Was it for this their wise King stole away
 From pomp and revelry,
To that lone dell where, by the fountain's brim,
His dewy-sandalled love kept tryst with him?

III

Ah, but the place was sweet!
 Beneath his heedless feet
He crushed the fern and deep delicious bloom
 Of violets. Sweeter to his soul her kiss,
Her arms that clasped him in the fragrant gloom,
 Her sigh of timid bliss!
Discrowned awhile, his brow upon her breast
Forgot its burden; dear he was, and blest.
 Perchance she whispered this —
'T was all she knew! Would'st thou her secret share? —
"Where Love is found, the wise find Wisdom there."

MIRANDA

“But you, O you,
So perfect and so peerless are created
Of every creature’s best!”

The Tempest. Act III., Scene I. SHAKSPEARE.

THOU pearl of maids, Miranda, — stainless, free,
Fearless of evil, yet not over-bold!
Thy beauty haunts my heart; beside the sea
In dreams, methinks I do companion thee,
Where ’neath the moon the waves shine silver-cold,
And thou, with gentlest shape of airy state,
And young eyes bright with innocent command,
While Ariel’s whisp’ring sprites around thee wait,
On the wide shore in musing mood dost stand.

High o’er thee darkens all the wooded isle,
Beneath thee all the stars in ocean smile,
And in thy face the lone and lovely night
Is mirrored lovelier! Maiden without guile,
Thou in that solitude hast no affright,
But murmurest to thyself a song the while
That charms the sleeping sea to deeper hush of light!

A VALENTINE

To E. H. R.

I

LADY, I know a prison
Where a captive pineth,
A dungeon dark and deep,
Where no beam of noonday shineth,
And the sweet consoling stars
Through those unrelenting bars
Never peep.

II

He is young but wasted
With a silent sorrow;
He dares not hope to-day
Nor can hope to-morrow;
Yet from life he may not part
Till the fires in his heart
Die away.

A Valentine

III

Oft have I thought him dead,
And his pain past forever,
But he only slept
To waken wild as ever;
His prayer for liberty,
Lady, grieved even me,
Till I wept.

IV

O shall I set him free —
The Boy in prison lying?
'Tis but a word from thee
And the door is open flying!
Thou only hast the key;
Will mercy sweet please thee,
Emily?

FROM THE BEACH — I

I

DEAR little Boat, home-faring
Across the white-capped sea,
I watch thee toss and tremble
Like the foolish heart in me:
Yet shoreward thou art speeding,
No homing bird flies truer;
Thy master's hand is steady,
Thy master's eye is sure.

II

Why should I dread the tempest?
The stress of coming years?
Why doubt the distant harbor
So dimly seen through tears?
I, too, may keep, though trembling,
A course as true as thine,
For, happy Boat, thy Master
Steers, too, this heart of mine!

FROM THE BEACH — II

I

COME with me!
The light wind and the sea
Laugh along the sunny shore together;
'T is summer weather!
My little sail is dancing on the foam;
Yon fairy isle to-day shall be our home!
O come with me!

II

Come with me!
The storm is on the sea;
Wild 'mid the surge that o'er us dashes
The lightning flashes;
We must drive headlong now before the gale;
I know not whither, nor how far, we sail,
But — come with me!

TWENTY YEARS AFTER

I

WELL, Time has touched you tenderly!
I knew he would! Was ever yet
Real or fabled, any *he*
Who, in your presence, could forget
The courtesy, the reverence, due
To all our faith enshrines in you?

II

The day for flattery, you say,
Is past? The smile with which that's said
Is just the same that used to turn —
When head and heart were light — my head.
And would they now — those serious eyes —
Persuade me that I've grown more wise?

Twenty Years After

III

Wiser and sadder? Yes — perhaps!
So much the more 't is well to feel
That where one worshipped in one's youth
Is still the fittest place to kneel.
No man whose heart you've deigned to school
Looks back to call himself a fool!

IV

That 's something to be thankful for —
When first illusions, thinning fast,
Begin to show how flat and drear
Life's real coast-line lies at last —
One high romance still throned in mist,
By dreams of dawn forever kissed!

V

You keep your secret still. I know
To-night no more than years ago
Why, of all mortal faces, yours
Should stir the soul within me so —

Twenty Years After

Old thoughts deep buried, not to rise,
Live, and reproach me, in your eyes.

VI

Old thoughts, old visions, old beliefs,
The thing I meant — but failed — to be!
Ah well! — Good-night! our ways part here —
Ay — and hereafter! — Yet to see
Your face for me that shadow wear
Perhaps of heaven is one man's share!

ONLY A WORD

I

ONLY a word!
A little wingèd word
Blown through the busy town,
Lighter than thistle-down,
Lighter than dust, by roving bee or bird
Brushed from the blossoming lily's golden crown,
Borne idly here and there,
Oft as the summer air
About men's doors the sunny stillness stirred.
Only a word!
But sharp — O, sharper than a two-edged sword,
To pierce and sting and scar!

II

Only a word!
A little word that fell
Unheeded as the dew
That from the darkling blue

Only a Word

Of summer midnight softly steals to tell
The tale of tinkling brook and star-lit dell
 In yonder noisome street.
There, pale with dust and heat,
The little window-flower in workman's cell
 Its drooping bell
Lifts up to meet the kiss it knows so well.
 A word — a drop of dew —
But O, its touch could life's lost hope renew!

AT LAST

I

I BUILT my bower in summer weather,
A bower no birdie need disdain,
Where two that loved might live together,
Safe sheltered from the wind and rain;
For now that woods are green, said I,
The Bird I love will hither fly.

II

The summer roses bloomed and perished,
The brooks grew silent in the grass,
Vain were the May-time hopes I cherished;
My Bird was but a dream, alas!
And thick about my lonely eaves
Began to fall the fading leaves.

At Last

III

And now the sky was drear November's,
And roared the wind and plashed the rain;
Sadly I brooded o'er the embers,
When, hark, against my window-pane
A flutter faint, a cry, I heard, —
I sprang to open — 't was my Bird!

IV

A tiny thing to brave such weather —
Its eyes were dim and chilled its feet;
Rain dripped from every drooping feather,
But O, its note was passing sweet!
I caught it close, I held it fast;
Love sings within my bower at last!

MEMORIES

I

DORA 'll be married to-morrow! Dora, the youngest
of all!

But yesterday she was the baby; now she is
twenty — and tall,
Taller than Helen or Margaret — a bride, and going
away!
And this old, sad house is once more bedecked for a
wedding day.

II

There'll be bustle enough in the morning, what with
dressing the bride,
And wedding guests to welcome, and Dora's last packing
beside;
To-night how quiet the house is! I hear but the wind's
low moan,
And the ticking clock in the corner. 'T will be so when
she is gone!

Memories

III

To-morrow I must be cheerful. Tears, to be sure, I
shall shed;
Tears for Dora, they will be; not for myself, nor the
dead.
But to-night when nobody heeds me and all the house
is asleep,
Dora herself would forgive me this sitting awhile to
weep.

IV

Ten years! — And it seems but a moment! Ten years
ago to-night
And I was our Margaret's bridesmaid, gay with a girl's
delight,
Fair, and so glad to be fair — for there was one to see!
O deep and fond was the look in his eyes that night for
me.

V

Nobody knew that I loved him. Nobody ever dreamed
I was more to him than the others; and yet to my heart
it seemed

Memories

We two, in a secret heaven — the heaven of bliss denied —
Were alone in the world together, when he was by my
side.

VI

He might not speak, and I knew it — but what was
that to me?
Hope is the slave that trembles; Despair is fearless
and free.
He came for his own: I gave it, unasked. Was it mine
to keep?
— How else could I bear to remember that grave in
the far cold deep?

VII

No words, but only a silence; no kiss, though we were
alone;
Not a sigh — his true heart guarded my secret as well
as his own,
But the clasp of that clinging hand, in his eyes that
passionate claim!
— So he left me. One week later, the news of the
lost ship came.

Memories

VIII

None pitied me; how could I tell them? I mourned
him all alone;
I mourn you as much to-night, Love, now ten long years
are flown!
Margaret has her husband; Helen, husband and children,
too;
But I have nothing, Lawrence, only my dream of you.

IX

Only a dream, and yet — are the others so much more
blest?
Sometimes I could almost think the sad, wronged love
fares best.
If that dream were the brief delusion that dies with the
bridal hour
Could I have borne its fading — my life's one perfect
flower?

X

It is pleasant to visit Margaret; her home is grand and gay,
Her husband is in the Senate, and “a rising man,” they
say;

Memories

They go everywhere together; he's polite to her, never
unkind,
And Margaret, I know, is learning woman's lesson — not
to mind.

XI

Yet I cannot choose but remember their courtship of
long ago,
When Richard came so early and was always the last
to go,
How they sat and talked in the twilight or, leaning
together, read
In the book — or the broidery pattern — some wonderful
thing unsaid.

XII

Does he ever care now to sit by her? Or know if she
works or reads?
He has too much to do for his party to think of the
life she leads —
That life he had vowed to cherish! Sad mockery! Yet,
I know,
He is one of the world's good husbands. Perhaps it is
always so.

Memories

XIII

They say it is always so, Love. Everything changes
but you.

Shall I blame Death? What am I, then, that you might
not have altered, too?

Better my dead than their living, grown so careless and
cold —

Dearer the kiss never given, the tale that never was
told!

THE CAPTAIN'S PRIZE

I

SHE came to me! she came to me!
As though a little bird should be
Blown out upon this wintry sea,
And, buffeted by storm and sleet,
Drop on the deck here at my feet.
Perhaps it was not wise nor well
To seek such refuge. Who can tell?
'Tis not the shelter you 'd expect
A bird or woman to select;
Nor I the sort of fellow — just —
A woman or a bird would trust.
But here she is. What 's next, we 'll see.
Up anchor, shake the mainsail free!
One thing is sure — she came to me!

II

A year ago I did not dare
To ask this lady could she care
My wild and wandering life to share;

The Captain's Prize

Too bold a question that, for me —
I, but a graceless sailor — she,
The fairest, daintiest, stateliest girl,
Of all her haughty house, the pearl!
See, now! Two little feet are set
Beside me, in the wind and wet;
The salt spray sparkles in her hair;
She turns her face to me — take care,
Sweetheart! between the wind and me,
You 'll think we have wild ways at sea!
And yet — you know you came to me!

III

All 's well! — the ship begins to feel
The long swell underneath her keel;
The harbor-lights behind us reel;
Far out, in rain and darkness, soon
We shall be running free; no moon
Nor star, Sweet, in the sky above;
Nor pilot wanted, now — but Love!
Give me those little hands that seem
To make all true that else were dream!
They 're mine — and yet, on sea or shore,

The Captain's Prize

I never shall be master more;
For O, there is such sovereignty
In their soft touch, their silent plea —
God knows, my Dear, you came to me!

TOUT LASSE: TOUT CASSE: TOUT PASSE

Gérard de Nerval

I

Tout lasse? — Even so! — The tired child, wearied with
his play,
Lest fall the toy that charmed him for
a day;
Murmuring, into the mystery of Night
He sinks — and wakens to a world of
light.

II

Tout casse? — Time crushes under foot the crumbling
shell;
Perish each tint that with the rainbow
vies!
Is thine the secret of that ruined cell?
Then in thy hand its deathless beauty
lies.

Tout Lasse: Tout Casse: Tout Passe

III

Tout passe? — The light, the shadow of this mortal day —
Sorrow and joy — how fast they fleet
away,
To blend as one in His eternal thought,
Where Love abides — and all that Love
hath wrought!

THE HOUR WILL COME

I

NOT yet — not yet! Between the night and morn
There is an hour, uncheered by moon or star,
That hungers for the day — the day unborn.

Never seems light so far
As when that hour sits, darkling and forlorn,
Waiting, as we wait, on the verge of morn.

II

Not yet — not yet! When, all athirst for rain,
The hot fields gasp, and up the sultry sky
The great clouds gather, darkening o'er the plain,
Earth stills her faintest sigh;
She waits — as we wait — dumb, in patient pain,
The crash with which the tempest breaks its chain.

The Hour will Come

III

Not yet — not yet! When, flooded full with streams

From mountain height and glen, the river wide
Brims near its thundering fall, how still it gleams!

No ripple stirs the tide
That waits — as we wait — holding hushed in dreams
The fate with which its current darkly teems.

IV

The hour will come! — the dawn, the thunder-peal,

The weltering plunge of waters down the steep:
Ay — thrones, dominions, powers, in terror reel,

Deep calling unto deep,
And star to star, when Judgment breaks the seal,
And tyrants learn, at last, with whom they deal!

THE POET'S GRAVE

FOR him no bitter tears we shed;
Rather, self-pitying, we sit and weep
That we are left, around his bed,
These annual rites of memory to keep
Ere we shall with our friend be laid,
Through the long summer days with him to sleep
Beneath the old oak's whispering shade.

Where doth he wait for us? To-night
Methinks the blooming earth and fragrant air
Should bring his dear ethereal sprite
To seek, this eventide, the old wood where
At eventide we used to meet,
And dream away day's sordid strife and care,
Till dews were thick beneath our feet.

A sweet and noble soul was he;
Too finely strung for this world's tuneless touch,
But breathing purest melody

The Poet's Grave

Of thought divine and tenderness to such
As loved him, — all too well aware,
Of weary worldliness and strife how much
His shrinking spirit needs must bear.

Alone with blossoms, birds and bees,
At last he sleepeth in the ancient shade ;
No voice, save murmur of the breeze,
And whispers in the flowery grass o'erhead
To mingle with his dream of peace —
If thou, our Poet, in the mould low laid
Dream still, where thou hast found release.

ON THE WAY HOME

I

THY light streams far, thou gladdening star,
O'er vale and forest, tower and town;
From land and sea men look to thee
In every clime, as night comes down:
And yet, were all the eyes that mark
Thy rising, closed in endless dark,
Undimmed would glitter still
Thy bright, unpitying spark.

II

I heed thee not. In yonder cot,
As home I haste, from toil set free,
Though dark and damp, the casement lamp
Shines clear, across the fields, for me.
Dear light! dear heart! how well I know
If bitter death should lay me low
Dark would that casement be,
And quenched your winsome glow!

PERSICOS ODI, PUER, APPARATUS

HORACE. *Odes*, I, XXXVIII

I

ALL this parade, Boy, that the Persian
Makes o'er his cups is my aversion!
 These wreaths you bind
 Of linden rind
Are nowise to my taste; and, mind,
I'll have no searching up and down
 For some late rose
 That, lingering, blows
Our little feast to crown!

II

Nor do I choose you should be taking
More time and pains than go to making
 The twist you may,
 Of myrtle spray,
Weave fresh, the year round, any day —

Persicos Odi, Puer, Apparatus

Fit leaf for you, who pour my wine,
And me, I think,
Who sit and drink,
Beneath the tangled vine.

DICK THE DISCONTENTED

I

“IF I had but a home of my own,” said he; —
Poor fellow, how sadly he sighed as he said it —
“If I had but a home of my own you would see
How steady and sober and saving I’d be,
Though for that, now, you give me no credit.

II

“To think I may never get quit of that trunk,
And die after all in a lodging-house attic!
So low at the prospect my spirits have sunk
You may thank your good stars I don’t go and get drunk,
Or pitch into some scrape, as bad and emphatic.”

III

“Dick, dearie,” she said, “now you’re foolish indeed,
Not to say you are really a little — ungrateful!
We can’t have our house yet, but what is the need
Of sulking and threatening? — You’re bound to succeed.
It’s this grumbling, I tell you, makes poverty hateful!

Dick the Discontented

IV

“And no home of your own, Dick? Why, where are your wits?

Here’s your home — in my heart, where you’re master forever,

Such a nice cosy corner, where nobody sits

But your own precious self! Very ill it befits

A fellow with your luck to talk about ‘never’!

V

“ . . . O there now! come Dicky, be sensible, do!

I really must finish this hat. See, to-morrow

We will walk in the Park — and the hat must go too,

With a rose and a ribbon set on, to please you!

For which I had neither to beg nor to borrow.

VI

“Good-night! go your ways! — I’ve heard something to-day

I may mention to-morrow, if you behave better.

I was told not to tell, so I hardly can say —

O such luck for us both! But it’s late: you can’t stay. —

You may take it and read it; it’s all in that letter!”

SUNT LACHRYMÆ RERUM

I

SHE wept; her tears like summer rain
Revived the beauty of her flower-like face;
She sighed — for wonder more than pain,
And, sighing, found she gained an added grace!
She wept, and sighed.

II

You think she did not care. She did,
For him who never wish of hers denied.
Nor should the deeper grief be hid;
She cared for many a thing that with him died:
So, wept and sighed.

III

Sorry and scared may yet be shrewd!
Wealth, homage, love, her beauty still might buy;
Sorrow prolonged might prove too rude,
Ay! — mar that face on which she must rely! —
Her tears she dried.

A REMONSTRANCE

(Addressed to one who asserted that man's friendship was worth more than woman's love.)

I

UNCERTAIN, capricious, inconstant, untrue,
A creature that can't be relied on —
That's the verdict of man, whose life's but a span,
Presuming our sex to decide on!

II

His life's but a span; somewhat brief, one would
think,
For a just and complete *self*-inspection,
Without complicating the task by debating
How far woman falls short of perfection!

III

And you too, though no woman-hater, my friend,
— More cruel, perhaps, because kinder —
Even you echo shabbily: "*Varium et mutabile*
She proves, wheresoever you find her."

A Remonstrance

IV

“*Place aux dames*” for awhile! Let a woman explain
Those similes graceful, but bitter,
With which civilized man, since discussion began,
Illustrates his rule — not to hit her!

V

There’s the moon, type of female inconstancy? Well,
Don’t you know that her changes are due
To the smiles and the frowns, the ups and the downs
Of her master — as ours are to you?

VI

There’s the wind, blowing hither and thither? ’Tis said
Woman’s fancy is fickle as air;
But the vacuum still that she’s trying to fill —
Ah! ’t is caused by a coldness, somewhere!

VII

Bring on all your emblems! The dew and the mist,
Sea and cloud, image woman’s caprices?
But observe, if you please, how each one of these
Confirms me in my exegesis.

A Remonstrance

VIII

Under infinite aspects, each still is the same
Vital element, pure and persistent,
You 'd tire of all beauty — 't would fail of its duty,
Were its forms ever fixed, near or distant.

IX

Thus, her mood ever changing, her mind still the same,
Woman's true, though she seem like a traitor;
One end she's pursuing, whatever she's doing,
And she reaches it, sooner or later!

A CHALLENGE

I

HE thinks himself granite. That suits him right
well,
Steadfast and stern as the mountain wall yonder!
Well, let him be granite, but I'll be the brook
Through cranny and crevice commissioned to wander;
The little brook, talking and teasing all day,
Darkling or bright, in its mischievous play
Wearing the heart of the granite away!

II

He may be ice, too, if that's to his mind,
Silent and cold as the winter-locked river!
He shall be ice — yes, and I'll be the star
That delights on its surface to sparkle and quiver;
The little star, lonely and daring and shy,
Which nobody marks as it creeps up the sky,
Its face, in the ice-mirror imaged, to spy.

A Challenge

III

Or he may be iron — good steel, I'll allow;
A blade rarely tempered, sharp, subtle and splendid!
But I'll be the lightning to dance on its point
By laws of electric attraction defended.
Brook, lightning, or star: there's a choice of the
three
In what shape I may come; but I vow he shall
see —
Ice, iron and granite don't terrify me!

IN OLD MADRID

I

SWEET, my red geranium flower!
Peeping through my lattice screen,
Like a maiden from her bower,
Forth, I pray thee, look and lean,
When far down the street thou hearest
Step of him my heart holds dearest.
Naught to fear, if thou art seen
Keeping watch in shine or shower,
Wishing, waiting, hour by hour;
Spiteful though the neighbors be
None will think to mock at thee.
Hark! he's coming! — Yes, 't is he!
Nod, dear flower! The wind blows free,
Nod — and if he seem to see,
Say one little word for me!

In Old Madrid

II

Tell him what my mirror shows —
Tresses glossy, black as night,
Brow of pearl, and lips of rose,
Dark-lashed eyes whose glances bright
Many a cavalier says, sighing,
Would reward a man for dying.
(This, of course, is far from right!)
But that I am fair, he knows,
Oft his looks the truth disclose;
Tell him I am good, likewise,
Very grave, discreet, and wise;
True I am, and scorn all lies,
Such as that Dolores tries
When she, whispering, sits and spies
Yonder, while her needle flies!

III

Bolder maid I never knew!
Like a parrot on its perch
Twists her neck the street to view
While the pious come from church,

In Old Madrid

And the young gallants are prancing,
Bowing here and there, and glancing!
Ah, they pass!— And you may search,
He's not there! And not for you
The rose that in our courtyard fell
Last night, by the moonlit well!
I'm no tattler, nor shall tell
Any soul how that befell!

O, I hope he loves me! Yet
So are maidens oft deceived;
Men their fancies soon forget,
Then the foolish one is grieved;
And with grief, one's bloom's departed.
Keep me, O sweet saints, light-hearted!

AFTER THE BALL

I

GOOD-NIGHT! If you and I were lovers
I'd say, "Good-night and dream of me,"
But prudence now — or pride — discovers
How very foolish that would be.

II

Since not a shadow of Love's blindness
Lurks in those eyes of yours, to bless
The man they dazzle with their kindness,
What use in signals of distress?

III

Look! — o'er yon sand-bar sails the moon; her
Smile, cool, brilliant, and remote,
Not much avails that luckless schooner
Fast stranded. Better keep afloat!

After the Ball

IV

Good-night! 't is I must do the dreaming;
 Your pillow dews oblivious steep.
Day's loss in Lethe thus redeeming
 Is Beauty's secret. *You* will sleep!

V

But when, with bird and rose, you waken
 And count your conquests, do me right;
I shall be wishing then I'd taken
 Another sort of leave! — Good-night!

SERENADE

I

DO not wake, thou Dearest!
No, no, sleep!
While in dreams thou hearest
Voices low and deep,
With pause and cadence, creep
Through all the winding ways
That weave their mystic maze
Around thy maiden heart,
Bid them not depart —
No, no, sleep!

II

Do not wake, thou Dearest!
No, no, sleep!
Love, since Love thou fearest,
Dreaming too, shall weep
The peace he needs must keep;

Serenade

Yet song and dream may dare
Breathe, still, Love's tender prayer;
Nor fright thy maiden heart.
Bid not Love depart —
No, no, sleep!

WHY?

I

WHY do I love you? I don't know!
They say Love never gives a reason;
But that he has one I don't doubt,
Do you? That's nothing less than treason!

II

Not always, let me tell you, Dear,
Love practised such excess of prudence;
'T was once his custom to explain
His moods and methods to his students.

III

And how to solve each puzzling case
He taught by rule and illustrations;
But sceptics, such as you, have made
Love shy of giving demonstrations.

Why?

IV

Why foolish mortals love at all,
Why we two hold each other dearest,
How long 't will last, and how 't will end,
You 'd like to know, you precious querist!

V

You never will! I'll tell you that!
Yet still maintain my first assertion;
Love understands what he's about,
And blinds us, just for his diversion.

VI

Ah, why I love you? If I knew,
I would not tell you. — No, no, never!
For souls like yours and mine were made
To play at hide and seek forever.

VII

There's little you do not find out,
But since that little makes life pleasant,
I think I'll keep the secret still,
And so keep you, too — for the present!

SONNETS — I

SWEET is that solitude where one dear face
Makes all the world! — that face wherein I read
Whatever's best in letters, art, or creed,
And all that's fair in manners, good in men,
By Love translated! In some loneliest glen
'T were bliss to dwell, sole student of thy grace,
Each day's new lesson in thy looks to trace!
And yet, in street, or hall, or market-place,
That face remembered makes a solitude
Divinely deep, where nothing mean or rude
Dares enter in. My Love! with thee abides
The charm that binds the earth, the stars, the tides:
Beloved by thee, where'er I rest or roam,
Dwells in my heart serene, the unalterable home!

SONNETS — II

LOVE came to thee as when among the hills
The April torrent leaps its bank, and breaks
Far down the valley in a flood that wakes
The startled herdsman, and with panic fills
The plain for bridges wrecked and shattered mills.
Homestead and hamlet reel; but soon retakes
The stream its channel, and with verdure makes
The toiler glad, among the fields he tills.
But hers the slower heart, that unawares
Received the tribute of Love's hundred rills
That steal in secret down to swell its strength,
Till brimming high with all that Passion dares
It bursts its builded barrier, and fulfils,
With one sheer desperate plunge, its fate at length.

SONNETS — III

SHEMNITZ

AT Eden's gate a Harp, old legends say,
Upborne by angels, waits: mark well the plan
Devised in Heaven to try the Soul of Man!
Six chords are seen whereon required to play,
Whoso calls music forth has leave to stay;
But though that soul escape the Judge's ban
And sits expectant, for a granted span,
Awaits it still another Judgment Day.
For one deep chord unguessed that Harp contains;
And he whose skill may o'er the rest prevail
To draw from six their far-resounding strains,
May yet to wake one note on Shemnitz fail.
And whoso fails on Shemnitz, for his pains,
Outside the gate, a stranger, still remains.

SONNETS — IV

NOVEMBER

ALAS! the bitter days before the snow!
When Earth lies like a corpse, unshrouded, bare,
Dumb, desolate, cold, beneath the backward stare
Of pale, receding suns; a primal woe
Mourns in the wailing wind that fain would know
The secret of this death of all things fair.
Who shall make answer? Evermore aware
Of Joy's dark ending, blindly man must share
The doom sad Nature, seeking to foreshow,
Writes in dead waste and ruin everywhere.

So be it! Let Youth, Strength, and Beauty go —
Even the heart's treasure — anguish past compare!
We die; God lives! O earth-born, answered so,
So armed — defy man's deadliest foe, Despair!

A LAST WORD

I

NO song is here for those the heart holds dearest;
Deep is the silence in Love's holy places!
Nor mine the gift to match dear names with
music:

And yet, methinks I sometimes see their faces
And hear their voices, for one happy moment,
Amid the alien words my fancy traces.

II

Ah, then I know the song, whate'er it may be,
Hath found its key-note in their very being:
Their lives, their spirit wake the passion in me
To seize the joy, the sorrow, past us fleeing
On that swift tide of Time, that sweeps forever
Sorrow and joy to shores beyond our seeing.

FOR KATHARINE AND ELIZABETH

(*Ætat. 8 and 5*)

A FAIRY SONG

I

FAIRIES, wake! — the sun is set:
Tree and turf with dew are wet,
And the moon with laughing light
Peeps above yon mountain height,
While beneath her witching beam
Mortals lie abed, and dream!

II

Now with tiny leaps, unseen,
We'll, across the shadowy green,
Steal far down the darkling dell,
And where tall ferns shield us well
Linger in the dusk to hear
Sounds too fine for mortal ear.

A Fairy Song

III

List — and hear the sweet Bluebell
Ringing slow its fairy knell!
Far and near amid the grass,
Where no ruthless footsteps pass,
Rings the Bluebell, sweet and low,
Good-night to the elves below.

IV

Hark! and hear the Windflower sigh
When the night-breeze wanders by!
Hear the little whispering wings
Of those merry moonlight things
Who from silver cup-lets pour
Dew for every thirsty flower!

V

O, but haste! — No more delay!
Now 's the time to dance and play!
Off with many a hop and skip
Down the woodland path we slip —

A Fairy Song

Trip and skip through hollows dark
Lighted by the Firefly's spark,
Till we reach the moonlit glen
Hidden deep from eyes of men,
Where from forest cave and cell
Thronging Fairies rush pell-mell,
And with bow and courtesy meet,
Pause, their lovely Queen to greet.

VI

Queen Titania, like a star,
Shining from her throne afar,
High upon a mossy mound
Bids the Trumpet Blossoms sound,
Waves her hand, and with a glance,
Smiling, gives us leave to dance.

VII

How the fairy maids and men
Sparkling, fly to partners then!
Queen's Own minstrels, twelve all told,
Crickets stalwart, black and bold,

A Fairy Song

Beat their tambours with a din
That bids us leap and whirl and spin.
Wild the music, wild the glee!
Bird and squirrel, from their tree
Peer, our tiny troupe to see,
At our midnight revelry.
Snake and toad come never near;
Spiders flee in mortal fear.

VIII

But, alas! the eastern sky
Shows the streak that bids us fly;
Ended now is all our fun;
Fairies do not love the sun.
Queen Titania lifts her hand, —
Vanish all! — at her command.

IN A CLOSET

I

O DEAR! and it's all your own fault, Allie,
Why *would* you keep swinging that door?
Now we both are shut up in the closet,
And can never get out any more —
That is, never more till Mamma comes,
And she'll not be at home until four!
She can't know how dark it is, in here,
And somehow, so smothered and tight! —
O Allie, you don't mean you're crying?
No, we're not going to stay here all night!
Put your little face up to the keyhole
And see what a pretty, bright light!

II

Allie dearie, you are not a baby!
And you never should scream and give way
To your feelings like that; and don't bang so!
There's nobody up-stairs to hear us.
Stop crying! Be good and we'll play.

In a Closet

In this closet are all Mamma's dresses:
I can feel the black silk, and the fur
On her nice winter coat; *you* feel, Allie!
'Tis almost as if we had her.
And something so sweet, and just like her,
Shakes out of her things when we stir.

III

I wish we could see! Here's her bonnet
With the lovely pink rose and lace bow.
I'll tell you what we can be thinking —
We are like poor blind children, you know!
They must feel to find out. I am thankful
We shall not always have to do so!
They can't see their father nor mother,
Nor their cat, nor a bit of blue sky,
Nor anything else in the world! Think,
They must stay in the dark till they die.

IV

We too must have patience, pretending
We're blind. Sit by sister — don't stand!
Never mind about cutting out pictures,

In a Closet

People can't always do what they've planned.
It's nice in the dark telling stories —
Give sister your soft little hand!

v

O hark! the clock strikes in the study!
I'll count, Allie. One — two — three — four!
Very soon now Mamma will be coming —
There she is — only one minute more! —
How glad the poor blind people must be
When the good Angel opens the door!

PRO BONO PUBLICO

HYMN FOR DECORATION DAY

I

SWEET smiles our mother earth to-day,
As in her childhood's dawn of yore:
The sunshine and the rains of May
Awake her heart to bloom once more,
Nor lingers in her Spring-time face
One thought of Winter's bitter days.

II

Yon hills that whitened in the blast
Are green from foot to crown again,
And streams that ice had fettered fast
Ring music with their broken chain:
Where howled the wind and whirled the snow,
The wild bird sings, the violets blow.

Hymn for Decoration Day

III

O hearts that bleed, O souls that cry
Against the working of His will
Whose storms leave sunshine in the sky,
Whose darkness bids the dew fall still,
Behold how soon His gracious years
Bring joy for mourning, light for tears!

IV

No more the battle-tempest raves,
Nor blood of brothers stains our sod:
They slumber in untroubled graves
Who passed through mortal strife to God:
While softly stirs above the dead
The sign for which their blood was shed.

V

They sleep, who heard the cannon roar,
The squadrons charge, the steel blades clang;
Far from their dreams forevermore
The onset fierce, the death-stroke's pang;
The pain is past — the peace they won
Shines sweet and steadfast as the sun.

Hymn for Decoration Day

VI

O therefore is it meet to bring
Our garlands to the soldier's tomb,
When sweetest blossoms of the Spring
In Winter's frosty footsteps bloom,
And Hope anew repeats to men
That even this dust shall live again.

A SONG OF THE CENTURY

(Written for the centennial anniversary of the incorporation of the town of Waterville, Maine, June 23, 1802.)

I

WHO will not love his country — the dear land
where he was born?

And we who love thee in our pride, to-day will
love thee more,

Thou who sittest between the Seas with a hand on
either shore!

The sunset gold is in thy locks, thy face is toward the
dawn,

And in thy lap the orchards lie, the vineyards and the
corn.

II

Thy mountain heights stand guard for aye; their white
crests greet the sun;

League on league thy forests marshal their serried pines
below;

A hundred rivers draw thy streams, rushing sea-ward as
they go

A Song of the Century

With the tribute of thy harvests and the triumphs thou
hast won —
Iron fruit of forge and furnace — who hath wrought
as thou hast done?

III

The roar of mighty cities — the din of steel-clad ways
that meet
And clang and cross each other thou hearest, night
and day,
But thou 'rt hearkening to the children in their school-
time and their play,
And they grow to fight thy battles and fling beneath
thy feet
The accursed fraud and falsehood that would mar thy
forehead sweet.

IV

Thy voice is heard in the Old World; they listen there
— and heed:
“What child of yesterday is this, that bids us all beware?
“She waxes bold as beautiful, she has strength and gold
to spare!”

A Song of the Century

So they forge their guns and build their ships, and are
thy friends indeed;
While England laughs across the Sea — “Blood tells —
we know the breed!”

v

O well it is to dwell with thee, North or South, or East
or West,
But in all thy pleasant borders from the mountains to
the Sea,
The valley of the Kennebec is the place where I would
be!
And here's a little City, dearer far than all the rest;
'Tis her hundredth birthday! — cheer her now, you who
know her best!

vi

You who know how fair her homes are beneath the
summer shade,
How many churches lift their spires — how trimly court
and lawn
With verdure charm the stranger's eye — how cheerily
at dawn

A Song of the Century

Bell and whistle wake her echoes — how Time's magic
touch has laid
A spell upon her College walls whose memory shall not
fade!

VII

Look back to the old Taconnet; your Waterville lies
there,
A cluster of rude dwellings in the clearing by the
stream
Where the shining salmon leaps; and the prowling wild-
cat's scream
At midnight scares the settler, in his troubled dream
aware
Of the dreaded Indian war-whoop and the burning roof-
tree's flare.

VIII

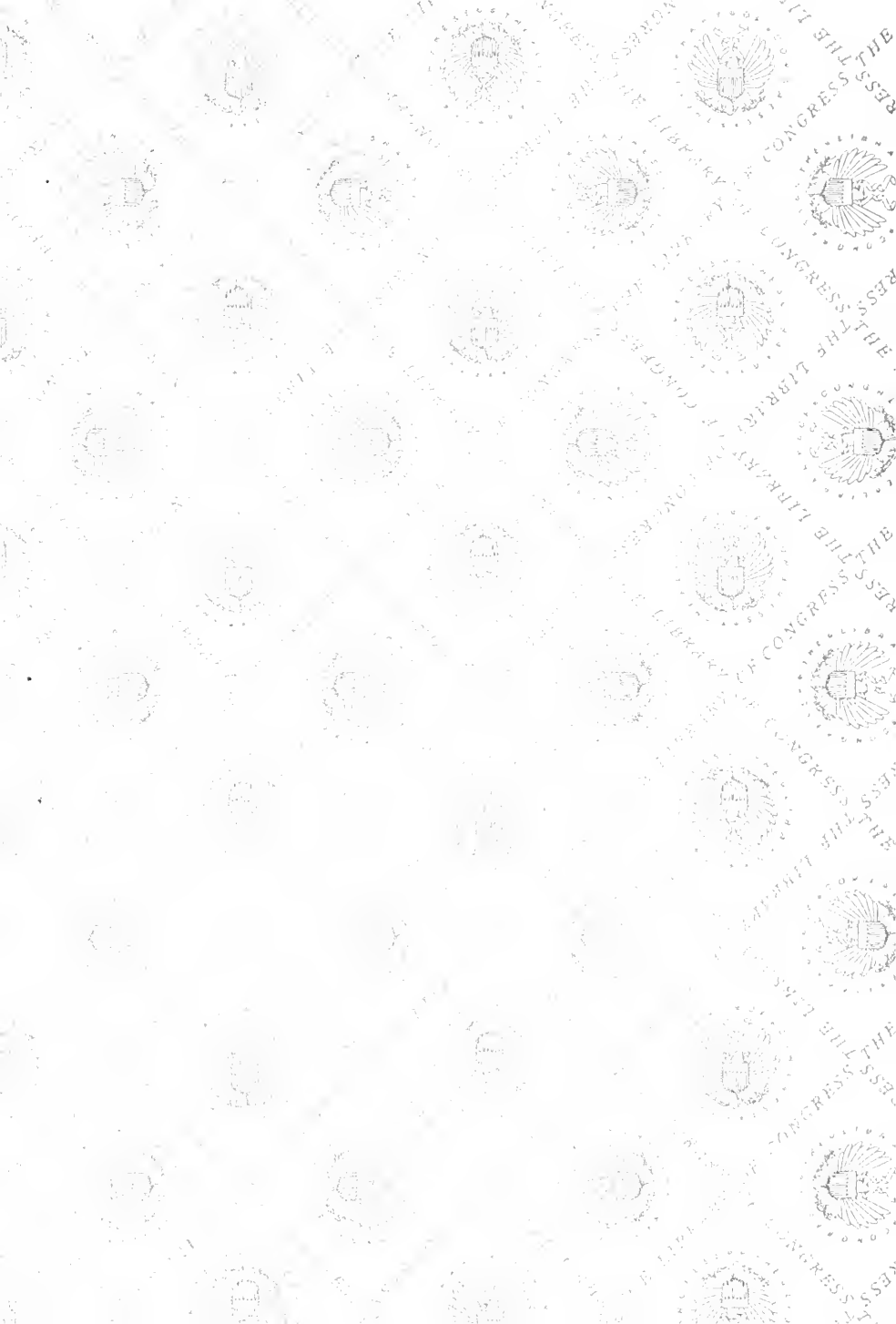
Other days and other lives now! But many a time,
since then,
In peace and war the little town has borne her part right
well.
She has her roll of heroes — some who unrecorded
fell.

A Song of the Century

They have passed; but what they stood for, stands;
 this day we bless the men
Who taught and toiled and fought for us with sword
 and spade and pen.

IX

They have passed — as we shall pass! Another century
 will see
The green turf growing over our own unheeded dust;
Well for thee, O little City, if some lives, generous, pure,
 and just,
Sow in thee *to-day* the seed whose fair harvest then
 shall be
A city's crown of glory — a people worthy to be free!



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